

§ 16.105 Eligibility of applicants.

(a) To be eligible for an award of attorney fees and other expenses under the Act, the applicant must be a party, as that term is defined in 5 U.S.C. 551(3), to an adversary adjudication for which it seeks an award; the applicant must prevail; and must meet all the conditions of eligibility set out in this subpart and subpart B.

(b) To be eligible for an award, the applicant must be:

(1) An individual with a net worth of not more than \$1 million;

(2) The sole owner of an unincorporated business which has a net worth of not more than \$5 million, including both personal and business interests, and not more than 500 employees;

(3) A charitable or other tax exempt organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) with not more than 500 employees;

(4) A cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)) with not more than 500 employees;

(5) Any other partnership, corporation, association or public or private organization with a net worth of not more than \$5 million and not more than 500 employees. A unit of state or local government is not a public organization within the meaning of this provision.

(c) For purposes of eligibility, the net worth and number of employees of an applicant shall be determined as of the date the proceeding was initiated.

(d) An applicant who owns an unincorporated business will be considered as an *individual* rather than a *sole owner of an unincorporated business* if the issues on which the applicant prevails are related primarily to personal interests rather than to business interests.

(e) The employees of an applicant include all persons who perform services for remuneration for the applicant, under the applicant's direction and control. Part-time employees shall be included.

(f) The net worth and number of employees of the applicant and all of its affiliates shall be aggregated to determine eligibility. Any individual, corporation or other entity that directly

or indirectly controls or owns a majority of the voting shares of another business, or controls, *in any manner*, the election of a majority of that business' board of directors, trustees or other persons exercising similar functions, shall be considered an affiliate for purposes of this part, unless the adjudicative officer determines that such treatment would be unjust and contrary to the purposes of the Act in light of the actual relationship between the affiliated entities. In addition, the adjudicative officer may determine that financial relationships of the applicant other than those described in this paragraph constitute special circumstances that would make an award unjust.

(g) An applicant that participates in a proceeding primarily on behalf of one or more other persons or entities that would be ineligible is not itself eligible for an award.

§ 16.106 Standards for awards.

(a) A prevailing applicant may receive an award for fees and expenses incurred in connection with a proceeding, or in a significant and discrete substantive portion of the proceeding, unless the position of the Department as a party over which the applicant has prevailed was substantially justified or if special circumstances make the award sought unjust. No presumption arises that the Department's position was not substantially justified simply because the Department did not prevail.

(b) An award will be reduced or denied if the applicant has unduly or unreasonably protracted the proceeding.

§ 16.107 Allowable fees and expenses.

(a) The following fees and other expenses are allowable under the Act:

(1) Reasonable expenses of expert witnesses;

(2) Reasonable cost of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project necessary for the preparation of the party's case;

(3) Reasonable attorney or agent fees;

(b) Awards will be based on the prevailing market rates for the kind and quality of services furnished not to exceed the rates set forth in paragraph (c) of this section.

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(c) No award under these rules for the fee of an attorney or agent may exceed \$75.00 per hour. No award to compensate an expert witness may exceed \$24.09 per hour.

(d) In determining the reasonableness of the fee sought, the adjudicative officer shall consider the following:

(1) The prevailing rate for similar services in the community in which the attorney, agent or witness ordinarily performs services;

(2) The time actually spent in the representation of the applicant;

(3) The difficulty or complexity of the issues in the proceeding;

(4) Such other factors as may bear on the value of the services performed.

§ 16.108 Awards against other agencies.

If an applicant is entitled to an award because it prevails over another agency of the United States that participates in a proceeding before the Department of Labor and the other agency takes a position that is not substantially justified, the award or an appropriate portion of the award shall be made against that agency by the adjudicative officer for the Department of Labor.

Subpart B—Information Required From Applicants

§ 16.201 Contents of application.

(a) An application for an award of fees and expenses under the Act shall identify the applicant and the proceeding for which an award is sought. The application shall show that the applicant has prevailed and identify the position of an agency or agencies in the proceeding that the applicant alleges was not substantially justified. Unless the applicant is an individual, the application shall also state the number of employees of the applicant at the time the proceeding was instituted and describe briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business.

(b) The application shall also include a statement that the applicant's net worth at the time the formal proceedings were instituted did not exceed \$1 million (if an individual) or \$5 million (for all other applicants, including

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their affiliates). However, an applicant may omit this statement if:

(1) It attaches a copy of a ruling by the Internal Revenue Service that it qualifies as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3)) or, in the case of a tax-exempt organization not required to obtain a ruling from the Internal Revenue Service on its exempt status, a statement that describes the basis for the applicant's belief that it qualifies under such section; or

(2) It states that it is a cooperative association as defined in section 15(a) of the Agricultural Marketing Act (12 U.S.C. 1141j(a)).

(c) If the applicant is a partnership, corporation, association, or organization, or a sole owner of an unincorporated business, the application shall certify that it did not have more than 500 employees at the time the formal proceedings were initiated, giving the number of its employees and describing briefly the type and purpose of its organization or business.

(d) The application shall state the amount of fees and expenses for which an award is sought.

(e) The application may also include any other matters that the applicant wishes the adjudicative officer to consider in determining whether and in what amount an award should be made.

(f) The application shall be signed by the applicant with respect to the eligibility of the applicant and by the attorney of the applicant with respect to fees and expenses sought. It shall also contain or be accompanied by a written verification under oath or under penalty of perjury that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

(Approved by the Office of Management and Budget under control number 1225–0013)

[46 FR 63021, Dec. 29, 1981, as amended at 47 FR 14696, Apr. 6, 1982]

§ 16.202 Net worth exhibit.

(a) Each applicant except a qualified tax-exempt organization or cooperative association must provide with its application a detailed exhibit showing the net worth of the applicant and any affiliates (as defined in § 16.105(f) of this part) as of the date when the proceeding was initiated, i.e. the date the